

Friendship Heights TMD Advisory Committee Meeting

Summary – Meeting of December 11, 2007

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Voting Members Present

Jessica Adams (Vice Chair)
Bob Cope (Chair)
David Glass
Leonard Grant
Leslie Olson
Steven Robins, Esq.
Carlean Russell
Robert Schwarzbart
Jeffrey Slavin
R. Mallory Starr
Garry Tyran

The JBG Companies
Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
Friendship Heights Village Council
Chevy Chase Land Company
Lerch, Early and Brewer, Representing Wisconsin Place
Saks Fifth Avenue (Employer of greater than 50)
Friendship Heights Village Council
Town of Somerset
Somerset House Management Association
Eagle Bank (Employers of fewer than 50)

Non-Voting Members Present

TMD Staff Present

Jim Carlson

DPWT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

Absent

Sandra Brecher
David Kantor
Chief Roy Gordon
Mary Herman
Capt. Russell Hamill
Charles Kines
Gregory Knoop
Kenneth Williams

DPWT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
DPWT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Chevy Chase Village Police
Polinger Shannon and Luchs (Employer of greater than 50)
Montgomery County Police
M-NCPPC
Oudens + Knoop Architects (Employer of fewer than 50)
GEICO

Guests

Afua Ofori
Bill McCloskey
Anyesha Mookherjee
James Ryan

Attending for Mary Herman – Polinger Shannon & Luchs
Brookdale Resident
MD State Highway Administration
DPWT/Transit Services Division-Taxicab Regulation

Items 1, 2, & 3 – Introductions, Review/Approval of Minutes, Chair's Comments: Members and guests introduced themselves. November's minutes were approved with one spelling correction.

Chairman Bob Cope stated that he would like January's meeting to take place in the Commuter Store. It is unknown if the store would be open at that time, but Mr. Cope would like to tentatively schedule it there.

Item 4 – Wisconsin Circle Update: **James Ryan**, DPWT, stated that DPWT would begin a 45-day pilot program for the Taxicab Call Button beginning December 15. The button and light are working, and a large sign has been installed in the window at the Commuter Store. The County will assess the results of the pilot at the end of the 45 days.

Jim Carlson stated that the process to produce suitable taxicab signs has been under way and that all efforts are being made to get the signs installed. The State Highway Administration's decision to disallow the original taxi call button signs along Wisconsin Avenue slowed things down. Commuter Services is seeking permission to change the existing blue and white taxi stand sign at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Wisconsin Circle. The arrow, which currently points in the direction of Willard Avenue, will instead point toward Wisconsin Circle and the taxi call button.

Mr. Ryan stated that County regulations allow only four taxis at the Willard Avenue taxi stand. In practice, however, there are typically more.

Mr. Ryan stated that there was some question regarding whether or not Lia's Restaurant had obtained a permit to operate its valet service. **Jessica Adams** answered that she believed Lia's had submitted the proper paper work to the County to obtain a permit; she will research.

Item 5 & 6 – Pedestrian Safety – Willard/Wisconsin Intersection: **Anyesha Mookherjee**, Maryland State Highway Administration, stated that in 2005 the east and westbound traffic signal phases for this intersection were split (with turn arrows), but for some reason they were changed so that the eastbound and westbound signals changed together instead of using the split phasing. Ms. Mookherjee stated she was not sure why the signal phasing was changed. The drawback to returning to the original split phasing, if that decision is made, would be that the number of cars able to traverse the intersection on each phase would be greater, as they would not be competing with traffic in the other direction. Pedestrians would have less time to cross the intersection. SHA would like to allow about 47 seconds of crossing time.

Mr. Cope asked why the pedestrian signals do not have countdown timers as they have in the District, and no matter how long the signal is, the "Don't Walk" portion of the signal could be held at, say, 20 seconds. Ms. Mookherjee stated that the Don't Walk phase is based on a percentage of the total signal time. Mr. Cope added that it would minimize confusion if the Don't Walk phase was allocated a uniform 20 seconds, regardless of the signal's actual length of time.

Robert Schwarzbart asked if the committee would still be requesting video studies at Wisconsin/Willard, and also in front of the two Medical Buildings, and whether this would be included in the letter.

Mr. Cope suggested that a separate follow up letter be written to request these studies.

Item 7 – Updates: **Jim Carlson** discussed the current year's budget. Commuter Services is about half way through with the current year's budget allotment, which is on target for the fiscal year. The largest expenditures are salaries, and the Super Fare Share program; the new Commuter Store has monies allocated but as yet unspent. There are currently 42 employers in the Super Fare Share program.

David Glass reiterated his observation that some of the functions of the Commuter Store, such as selling transit passes, could be more efficiently provided by the County liquor store or similar

outlet. The cost of operating the Commuter Store should be re-examined, especially in light of the County's \$400 million budget shortfall. It did not appear that the community was getting a good return on its investment.

Jeffrey Slavin stated that it was not within the purview of the committee to recommend revisiting the Commuter Store decision.

Steven Robins added that return on investment is much higher than the actual cost of the store. The Commuter Store provides outreach to the community, and its presence and high visibility will promote greater transit use.

One committee member observed that he would be uncomfortable sending his children to a liquor store to purchase a bus pass.

Item 8 - Other Business: The January 8, 2008, meeting may be held at the new Commuter Store if the space is ready; otherwise the meetings will continue to be held at the current location at Somerset.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:50 AM.

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